

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the amendments above and the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-38 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, Claims 1-38 have been rejected. By the above amendments, Claims 1, 4, 11, 14, 21, 24, 31 and 34 have been amended and Claims 2, 3, 12, 13, 22, 23, 32 and 33 have been canceled. Accordingly, Claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Within the Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-13, 16-23, 26-33 and 36-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereinafter “Witek”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,661 to Doan et al. (hereinafter “Doan”).

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 and as secondary selection parameters 62. In summary, the first part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on category, or in other words a hierarchical search (Witek, col. 13, lines 30-46). The second part of the search process is limited to performing searches based on entered parameters, in other words keyword search or parametric search.

Witek does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Witek does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database,

four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Witek does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Doan teaches a hierarchical query syntax for inquiring and selecting among database objects. Doan does not teach a dichotomous key search. Further, Doan does not teach performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, Doan does not teach that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database.

Accordingly, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches performing a search in which for any given searching step, at any location within the database, four different search methodologies are available to be used to perform the search. Specifically, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that any of a keyword search, hierarchical search, dichotomous key search and parametric search can be used at any location within the database. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teaches that each access of a searchable database includes availability of each search.

The independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within an electronic system. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and manually traversing the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization includes availability of each search*. As

discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 6-10 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 6-10 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 11 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 11 comprises means for formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, means for accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and means for manually traversing the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 11 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 12 and 13 have been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 16-20 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 16-20 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 21 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 21 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree

structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure and further wherein the research server is utilized by a user to manually traverse the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node by utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 21 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 22 and 23 have been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 26-30 depend on the independent claim 21. As described above, the independent claim 21 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 26-30 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

The independent claim 31 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within an electronic system. The network of devices of claim 31 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query language string, wherein the query language string is a command string written according to a query language that defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure, wherein the research server is utilized by a user

to manually traverse the navigation path through the directory tree structure to access the node by utilizing a selective one or more search methodologies including keyword search, hierarchical search, *dichotomous key search*, and parametric search, wherein *each utilization includes availability of each search*. As discussed above, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach a dichotomous key search. Further, neither Witek, Doan nor their combination teach that each utilization includes availability of each search. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 31 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination.

Claims 32 and 33 have been canceled by the above amendment. Claims 36-38 depend on the independent claim 31. As described above, the independent claim 31 is allowable over Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 36-38 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Within the Office Action, claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of Doan and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereinafter “Drucker”).

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on the independent claim 1. Claims 14 and 15 are dependent on the independent claim 11. Claims 24 and 25 are dependent on the independent claim 21. Claims 34 and 35 are dependent on the independent claim 31. As discussed above, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are each allowable over the teachings of Witek, Doan and their combination. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 4-11, 14-21, 24-31 and 34-38 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
HAVERSTOCK & OWENS LLP

Date: March 23, 2005

By: Jonathan O. Owens
Jonathan O. Owens
Reg. No. 37,902

Attorneys for Applicant